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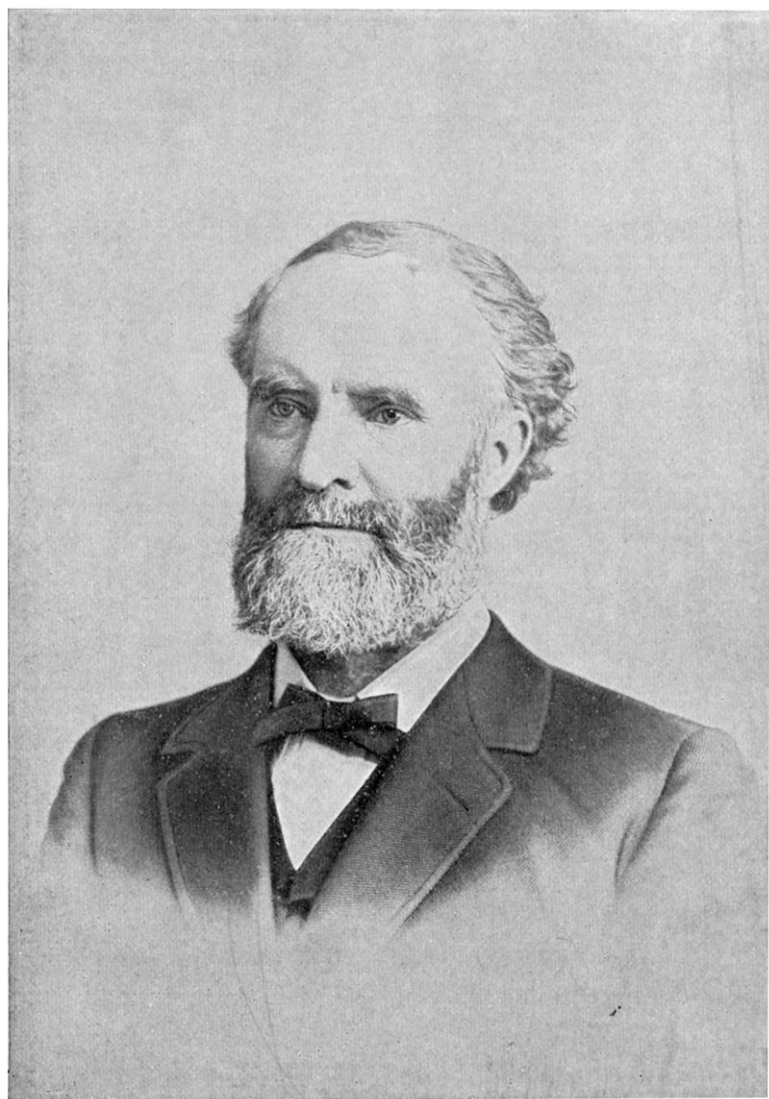
AMERICAN NEW TESTAMENT SCHOLARS:
LLEWELYN JOAN EVANS, D. D., LL. D.

By Prof. ARTHUR C. MCGIFFERT,
Cincinnati, O.

Llewelyn Joan Evans, D. D., LL. D., Professor of New Testament Greek and Exegesis in Lane Theological Seminary, Cincinnati, was born at Treuddyn, near Wold, North Wales, June 27, 1833.

Both of his grandfathers, the one as a clergyman, the other as a ruling elder in the Welsh Presbyterian church, were long leaders of religious thought in Wales, and did much to modify the original Calvinism of the church to which they belonged. His maternal grandfather, Roberts, was a man of marked poetical talent and was the author of many well known Welsh hymns. His paternal grandfather, though not a clergyman, was a theological writer of considerable note. Prof. Evans' mother possessed her father's poetical temperament and talent and was a woman of rare intellectual gifts and attainments. His father was a clergyman in the Welsh Presbyterian church and a man of acknowledged ability, but owing to his retiring disposition he possessed less influence than his own father and his wife's father had enjoyed.

Early in the Fifties the family removed to this country and the father became pastor of the Welsh church in Racine, Wisconsin. While still in Wales the subject of this sketch attended college at Bala, giving promise even at that early day of a brilliant career. He was noted among his acquaintances both for intellectual ability and for oratorical powers and was often heard on public platforms while still but a boy. Removed to Wisconsin he continued his studies at Racine college, graduating there with the degree of B. S. in 1854 and of B. A. in 1856. Soon after his graduation he was elected a member of the Wisconsin legislature, but after serving for a few months he went to Cincinnati and connected



Prof. LLEWELYN JOAN EVANS, D. D., LL. D., of CINCINNATI, O.

himself with the editorial corps of one of the local dailies. Within a short time he made up his mind that the path of duty for him lay in the line of the Christian ministry and he therefore entered Lane Seminary, graduating thence in 1860. Immediately upon his graduation he became pastor of the Seminary church, and three years later professor of Church History in the same institution. In 1869 he was transferred to the chair of Biblical Literature and Exegesis and for four years taught both Hebrew and Greek, being relieved of the latter in 1871 by the creation of a new professorship of New Testament Greek and exegesis. In 1875, after the death of Prof. Thomas, the first incumbent of the new chair, Prof. Evans succeeded him, and has thus been for sixteen years in his present position. Since the death of Dr. Henry Smith in 1879 he has been the senior member of the faculty.

That the Bible should be the subject of Prof. Evans' life-work was foreshadowed in his early training. As is well known the Welsh Christians are peculiarly diligent in the study of the Word of God and in his family the attention given to that study was unusual even for that place and time. During his boyhood his talented and devout mother gave an hour of every day to the instruction of her children on religious subjects, and especially in the Scriptures. The result of it was that even as a boy Dr. Evans was "mighty in the Scriptures" and in a youthful way was already something of a commentator and sermonizer.

As Lane Seminary pastor from 1860-'63 he produced a profound impression. There are many that still remember the power and the charm of his earliest sermons in which his profound religious insight and his fine literary talent were already marked. He has always been one of the most fascinating and inspiring of preachers, and that not by virtue of voice or presence, but by reason of his clear apprehension of spiritual truth and his thorough sympathy with it, coupled with his marvelous power of giving that truth adequate expression. The regret is very deep and widespread especially among those who knew him best and heard him oftenest that of late years owing to poor health his voice has not been heard in the pulpit.

But it is as a teacher that Prof. Evans has done his greatest work and left his deepest impress. His rare scholarship, his keen insight and broad outlook, his logical grasp and his literary genius, unite with his personal qualities to make him one of the most fascinating and inspiring of instructors. The universal and enthusiastic affection and admiration of his students are the best testimony to his power. As it was not my privilege to enjoy the benefits of his instruction I have asked one of his pupils to write me his impressions of Dr. Evans as a teacher. I cannot do better than to quote a few sentences from his letter;

"I find it to be less easy than I thought to write out even the brief notes you ask of me concerning Dr. Evans. Even at the best I leave the life out, and in Dr. Evans more than in most men, it is what he is rather than what he does or says that is the man. The student at first glance is liable to underestimate Dr. Evans. In the broad, thoughtful brow and level abstracted gaze he reads good warrant for the professor's reputation among his students for almost omniscience, but fails to see that personal charm on which all Dr. Evans' pupils love to dwell. But let some student come forward in those few moments which precede the opening of the recitation to ask some question or state some difficulty, and the professor's face lights up with such a cordial smile, there is such an unaffected warmth and candor in his whole manner, that one understands at once a part of his great power over his students." "He enters always into the student's difficulty whatever it may be, he seems to place himself at the questioner's standpoint, and as a result none who comes to him with a perplexity goes away unhelped."

"In the class room the professor's vast scholarship makes luminous every least detail of the work in hand. If the term's work be on an epistle of Paul the surroundings are re-created. Land, people and time we learn to know with him. That great thought-atmosphere, through appreciation of which alone can a true prospective of the past be obtained, we enter and appreciate with him. Chiefest of the services which he renders us is that we learn to know the writer whom we are reading. So thoroughly does he know and love

Paul's form of thought and expression that it sometimes seems to us that thus might Paul himself comment on and make clear his own writings."

"But if in noting the rigidity of Paul's logic and the accuracy of his intellectual processes Dr. Evans is luminous, in noting the scope of his doctrine, and even more, when in some swift apostrophe or appeal the man Paul stands before and above his logic, the exposition becomes alive. Then notebooks are pushed aside and we can only listen. No pen can follow the swiftness of that utterance and no sentence dare be missed. Each new one is a new phase of the truth. The thought does not fit itself to a formula which the student may learn and repeat *ipsissima verba*, but forms a picture in the memory which is a perpetual surprise in its constant vitality and suggestiveness."

"So the student's impression of Dr. Evans is that he is the simplest, kindest, clearest, purest of men, royally gifted; and he is at the same time so grandly modest and unassuming that he inspires in them a loving loyalty such as few men have been blessed withal." No one that has known many of Dr. Evans' pupils can doubt the representative character of this testimony.

Theologically Dr. Evans is broadly liberal, yet sound in the faith. He is honest and earnest in his search for the truth and frank and fearless in his utterance of it. He is abreast of the best New Testament scholarship of the age and recognizes the value of the most searching Biblical criticism, but in his careful and reverent hands such criticism is always constructive.

Dr. Evans has not published as extensively as his pupils and friends wish that he had, but in all his writings is manifested a broad and accurate scholarship combined with remarkable depth and vigor of thought. From 1863-66 he was corresponding editor of the *Central Christian Herald*, and from 1887 until 1890, he was one of the associate editors of the *Presbyterian Review*. In 1874 he translated and edited Zöcker's commentary on Job (in the Schaff-Lange series). He has also published many articles, among them the "Doctrinal Significance of the Revision," (*Presbyterian Review*, 1883)

and the "Biblical Doctrine of the Intermediate State," (*ibid.* 1887), besides numerous reviews, sermons and addresses. Notable among the latter is the address on "Biblical Scholarship and Inspiration," which appeared last spring and attracted widespread attention. His papers on the Revision of the Westminster Confession called forth by the recent movement in the Presbyterian church were also widely read. It is the hope of all that know him that theological literature may yet be enriched by a commentary from his pen on the epistles or at least on the greatest epistle of Paul. Those of us that have heard even a part of his exposition of Romans know that such a contribution would be of great and permanent value.

From his mother and maternal grandfather Prof. Evans inherits a very marked poetical talent which he has put to good use in the composition of a large number of Welsh hymns. In all his writings—of whatever character—evidences of his talent appear, and in his sermons and addresses passages of rare beauty and of genuine poetic power recur again and again.

But no sketch of Dr. Evans could lay claim to even partial completeness which failed to take account of a lighter side of his nature exhibited in social converse and in many minor productions of his pen. Blessed with a vein of sparkling wit and with a keen sense of humor he is one of the most entertaining of men, not simply to his students and to his professional brethren, but also to a very wide circle of friends, who know him not as a theologian but only as a man, to whom he has endeared himself by his personal charms as well as by his unaffected warmth and simplicity of heart.

It has been my privilege for three years to be associated with him as a colleague, and I have learned, with my brethren of the faculty, to know and to esteem his sound judgment, his high scholarly ideals, his intense devotion to his life work and his deep interest in the welfare of the students under his charge. May he long be spared to the institution which he loves and to which he has given more than thirty years of honorable and honored service!